litically viable one as well. In 1977 Sheikhanzai women and men had together succeeded in establishing the most productive pastoral economy in western Afghanistan. Unlike some of their pastoralist and agricultural neighbors, they engaged in very little out-migration for wage labor in other areas of the country or in Iran, and they remained capable of resisting governmental efforts at economic incorporation and political encapsulation. All conflicts and disputes were resolved through indigenous institutions and processes, rather than being taken to officials of the central state, and the Sheikhanzai refused to accept various "citizenship" responsibilities such as taxation since they neither needed nor received any services from the government. For this reason, too, distinctions made between men and women in Afghanistan with respect to employment, education, legal and political representation, and rights in marriage and divorce did not apply to Sheikhanzai women and men, nor did problems of class differences in wealth and power.

A PROGRAM FOR SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE AMONG THE SHEIKHANZAI

Beginning in 1974 and continuing until the abortion of the project after the communist-led coup and change of central government in April of 1978, the World Bank sponsored a plan for the "rationalization" of pastoralism in western Afghanistan. With officials drawn from the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture and consultants with expertise in range management and veterinary services, the Herat Livestock Development Corporation (HLDC) was established as an umbrella organization for a program of land and animal purchase, sedentarization of pastoral nomads, development of economic cooperatives, quality control in sheep marketing, and the slaughtering and exporting of frozen lamb and mutton for sale in Iran.

In addition to the stated intentions of the program to improve health standards and marketing facilities in pastoral production, the plan was also implicitly directed toward the introduction of a profit motive, the breakdown of local kinship and ethnic obligations, increased support for village-based animal husbandry, reduction of animal smuggling and migrant labor between Afghanistan and Iran, and the general extension of governmental control over economic and political processes in rural and isolated regions of western Afghanistan.

There are many reasons why this program was already a failure before the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan finally terminated relations with the HLDC in 1978. I have noted in another discussion of the topic that this program was neither ecologically nor economically rational for people such

as the Sheikhanzai in western Afghanistan.[2] In addition, the simple fact that it was a program designed and administered by representatives of, and consultants to, the central government made the program suspect in the views of the Sheikhanzai, irrespective of potential benefits that might have accrued to them. When, for example, they would hear radio reports of the money being spent on the program, the Sheikhanzai cynically, but probably accurately, insisted that such money was only lining the pockets of administrators or, at best, assisting sedentary villagers involved in husbandry rather than nomadic pastoralists like themselves. Indeed, the government was consciously trying to follow a policy of encouraging, rather than coercing, nomads to sedentarize. The opportunities of various features of the HLDC program were thus directed toward those nomads who would willingly adopt a new and largely inappropriate economic and social pattern, and this the Sheikhanzai would not do.

Among other things, the Sheikhanzai specifically objected to conditions of the program that would have required them to join in economic cooperatives with villagers, whom they considered their competitors, if not their enemies, for land and local political hegemony. They also wanted the flexibility to sell their surplus animals when necessary instead of according to the fixed schedules of the HLDC slaughterhouse and marketing operations. Furthermore, they saw no reason why they should have to pay for the vaccines and medicines that veterinarians insisted they use for their animals, and it was especially galling to them that they would be expected to pay interest on the credit necessary for obtaining such vaccines in the first place. Most importantly, they recognized that their mobility and political and economic autonomy would be severely curtailed by dependence upon such an organizational adjunct to the central government.

So, the Sheikhanzai did not make use of opportunities which were beginning to become available to other people, especially sedentary village pastoralists, in the area. There was no violence, or even much verbal hostility, rather, simply an avoidance of HLDC interviewers—most of whom were urban Afghans, range management specialists, marketing agents, and veterinarians. They knew of the activities of HLDC personnel but made no efforts to seek them out. In addition, the locations of both their summer and winter pastures were sufficiently removed from roads which could be used by HLDC trucks and even jeeps so that the Sheikhanzai knew they would not be bothered very frequently by either HLDC or other government agents.

Since the Sheikhanzai were among the most powerful and productive pastoralists in the area, their refusal to participate was a major blow to the objectives of the program as a whole. Without the involvement of the nomadic populations of the area, the HLDC could not hope to provide enough animals for the

2. "A Cultural Analysis of Sheikhanzai Economic Behavior," in *Culture and Ecology: Eclectic Perspectives*, American Anthropological Association Special Publication No. 15, 1982.

slaughterhouse operation nor to coax enough people into cooperatives to offer them credit for land and further animal purchases.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SHEIKHANZAI WOMEN: NEGLECT AND RESISTANCE

Obviously, the HLDC program had many problems which could have been alleviated had more attention been given to the actual circumstances of Sheikhanzai patterns of organization and production. Although it would be inaccurate to claim that the program failed only because the roles of women were neglected, we have seen that the contributions of women are instrumental to the Sheikhanzai system of adaptation as a whole. The long-term implications of the program for women included denial of their independent control over dairy resources and the political power which rested upon this control. However, rather than artificially separating the control and power available to women from the interests of men, it is more fruitful to reiterate that women's activities and relationships are central to the entire society. Sheikhanzai women are not merely active in the private and domestic realm of their society; their labor and control of resources are essential ingredients in all aspects of social, economic, and political life. Hence, the economic and social interests of women and men are not at odds in general terms, and they were not at odds with respect to their relations with the HLDC.

Nevertheless, the objectives and activities of the HLDC totally neglected the roles of Sheikhanzai and other pastoralist women. To my knowledge, no Sheikhanzai women were consulted with respect to any aspect of the program. It was simply assumed by the official staff and specialized consultants, on the basis of experience with similar projects in South Africa and Australia, as well as on the basis of stereotypes about Muslim women, that pastoralism was a strictly male-dominated economic system. Not only was it assumed that animals were owned solely by men, but also that a pastoralist economy was sustained primarily by the breeding and marketing of live animals. In contrast, the Sheikhanzai depended far more significantly on the production and exchange of dairy products, and these activities were under the control of women more than men. In addition to the question of how such production and exchange of surplus dairy products were intrinsic to social relations of Sheikhanzai within their camps and lineages, the men's dependence on women's labor and control over the flow of resources within the household itself was ignored.

Instead it was assumed that men would become the representatives of their households within economic cooperatives, and that these economic cooperatives would be formed on a basis independent of kinship and ethnic identity and obligations. The cooperatives were to be given credit for the purchase of land, breeding stock, and animal vaccine, and the profits made from the sale of live

animals would go toward purchase of subsistence and luxury goods as well as toward repayment, with interest, of the loans. The cooperatives as a whole would be responsible for the production and credit of their individual members, and they were specifically meant to reduce "irrational" expenditures in the areas of religious ritual, marriage transactions, and local patterns of household hospitality and kinship-based economic reciprocity and mutual assistance.

So, not only was the power of Sheikhanzai women to be undercut in matters of resource production and control, but also within the social matrix in which Sheikhanzai economic relations were embedded. Much of the power of Sheikhanzai women depended upon relations between households and camps, and not only upon their labor, or "drudge work" as some would call it, within the tent-household. In stripping the Sheikhanzai away from their kinship nexus, the HLDC program was also, intentionally or not, stripping women away from their roles as power-brokers and power-wielders.

It did not take an outside analyst to advise the Sheikhanzai about these ways in which women's economic significance and political power would be diminished. The Sheikhanzai women I spoke to or overheard were quite aware of such problems on their own. For example, Guljan, the widowed mother of the camp headman who was my main host, repeatedly asked her son, Shireen, if he intended to sell some of their household's large flock of over 200 sheep and goats to the HLDC slaughterhouse or to remain in a joint-household and in an economic partnership with his younger brother, Saleh. Since Guljan was the senior woman in the household and could direct the production activities of her three daughters-in-law,[3] this question was not simply a matter of curiosity but reflected directly upon her own status and privileges.

Although milking and other dairy-production duties associated with the large family animal-holdings were burdensome for all four of the adult women in the household, the women in general, and Guljan in particular, enjoyed the ability to control the production and distribution of dairy resources. The animals themselves were of little direct interest to them, but without such a large flock, the women's participation in resource control could not be as effective since they would only be able to keep up with consumption needs rather than producing a surplus. In addition the economic partnership would have been broken up if either of the two brothers decided to sell animals necessary for producing enough milk for the full household. Aside from the acrimony this could create in decisions about which brother would receive which of the animals from a herd they had never subdivided after the death of their father, this would also mean that

3. Shireen was one of the very few Sheikhanzai men who had more than one wife. Because his first wife had borne three daughters but no sons, Shireen took a second wife a few months before my research.

the sharing of labor possible between the four women while the household was kept intact would be sacrificed.

The implications of such changes extended beyond Guljan's household and to the other tents in their camp-group as well. Because of the large number of animals managed by her two sons, only two other households could graze their animals and live in the same camp with them. Each household was linked through patrilineal ties to Shireen and Saleh, but each was too poor in animals to be able to produce sufficient milk for its own household needs. Instead, they took responsibility for milking some of Shireen and Saleh's animals and kept the proceeds for themselves. Also, they had no independent land rights in the pastures where they camped, and obtained pasturage for their animals through Shireen and Saleh who had bought the land from villagers a few years earlier. The break-up of Guljan's household would have eliminated the dairy products they obtained from that household as well as their rights to use the local pastures. Even if one of the two brothers decided to continue to use the local pasture, the other brother would reclaim his own portion of the price paid for the land. However, despite their relative wealth in comparison to other Sheikhanzai, neither Shireen nor Saleh could have paid for the pasture land on his own. Hence, their own land rights would be jeopardized as well.

In other instances of discussions about the HLDC, Sheikhanzai women reminded their husbands and sons that not all the animals in the households' flocks were the men's to sell. That is, in each household, animals were held in trust for women who had received these animals from their brothers and other close relatives. Usually, such animals were officially considered to be "on loan" for purposes of adding to a household's milk supply, reducing the number of animals that had to be milked in the brother's own household, and providing animals for improved breeding. Sometimes, however, the animals were owned by the women themselves, as inheritance from their deceased husbands or through inheritance from their mothers. Guljan owned about 20 milk-animals she had received from her husband, and she retained control of how these animals would be disposed of upon her death or earlier. Shireen and Saleh understood that she wanted the animals to be given to her three daughters and their families. All three daughters were married to men who were still somewhat impoverished by the large bride-prices they had paid to Shireen and Saleh, and they were entitled to such a gift from their mother as well as economic assistance from their brothers.

Another example of women's resistance to the objectives of the HLDC program is clearly demonstrated by their complaints about possible sedentarization and interaction with villagers. Although Sheikhanzai men were in frequent interaction with Dari-speaking villagers and merchants, Sheikhanzai women were al-

most exclusively restricted to relations with their Pushtu-speaking relatives.* They had free run of their camps, of course, and they frequently visited relatives in other camps, but the occasions when they had to cook for Dari-speaking guests were uniformly resented. On these occasions women were neither directly included in the conversations nor able to come and go as they pleased while their husbands were conducting business.

Also, when on migration and travelling through villages and towns populated by Dari-speakers, Sheikhanzai women tried to rush by as quickly as possible to avoid taunts and jeers about their appearance and about how they "smelled like animals." Very few had ever been in a village house, but all claimed that they found them claustrophobic, at least from the outside. Finally, as owners of the household tents, women recognized another advantage available to them about where they would live and with whom they would interact as nomads. Both women and men complained about the arduous nature of their semi-annual migrations, but they recognized that important ecological, political, and interpersonal objectives were achieved through nomadism. For women in particular, the personal freedom and mobility available through life in nomadic camps were not luxuries to be treated lightly or to be abandoned willingly. One woman said to me that when she was not in the openness of the camp, for example, once when she had to see a doctor in town, as well as when she passed through towns on migration, "delam migireh," or, colloquially, "my heart stops."

My own initial experiences with Sheikhanzai women were rather distant and cold despite the cordiality of their husbands. It was only after I participated in the spring migration on foot with them, and refrained from asking them to load my belongings on their camels or donkeys or for permission to sleep in their tents along the way, that women started interacting with me on a more comfortable basis. One day when a young girl asked if it was all right for her to talk to me, her mother said, "Yes, he's one of us now." From that time on, other Sheikhanzai women and girls seemed less aloof and were quite pleased when I would bring some tea or sugar with me when I was invited to eat in their tents. The few gifts I was allowed to give them, for they would never accept money or wheat from me as reciprocation for their hospitality, still managed to set me off as somehow different from their generalized and always suspicious views of "Farsiwan."

Negative views of villagers and merchants were frequently reinforced by such events as land-disputes, confiscation of animals said by villagers to have

* Dari, or Afghan Farsi (Persian), and Pushtu are both Iranian languages but are not mutually intelligible. Although Pushtu is the national language, Dari is the *lingua franca*. Ed.

trampled cultivated fields, beatings of shepherds and even young boys who were assisting in overnight herding, and attempts by villagers to block access to water and pasture. Also, stories about the kidnapping of women and children existed on both sides, but no Sheikhanzai men were married to non-Pushtun women in any of the 50 camp-groups I visited, and no Sheikhanzai family admitted that it would consider allowing even a kidnapped daughter to remain in a village. Sheikhanzai women were genuinely afraid of having to interact more with villagers if the economic cooperatives of the HLDC should be brought into being. And, perhaps even more, they were extremely reluctant to give up the broadly-based territorial relations they enjoyed through visiting kin, especially their brothers, in other camps.

Another basis for condemnation of village life and villagers was in the Sheikhanzai view of agriculture. Sheikhanzai men and women referred to cultivation, especially plowing and weeding, as "beast work" and clearly inferior to their own life-style. Despite the numerous hours women spent each day in milking animals, making yogurt and butter, baking bread, obtaining water and kindling, and so forth, almost all of this activity was carried out outdoors and in the company of other women. The work they associated with village women, on the other hand, was understood to be solitary, confining, and physically strenuous. Not only did Sheikhanzai women not want to interact with villagers, but they also did not want to adopt such aspects of sedentary life for themselves either. The objections they raised when I asked them about their preference for nomadic life were addressed not only to the kinds of activities and privileges they would have to relinquish if sedentarized but also to the kind of work they would be expected to do if they had to live in farming communities.

In sum, the women possibly had more to lose than the men did if the HLDC program had been successful in encouraging adoption of a more sedentary life and greater interaction with villagers, increased involvement in agricultural activities, reduction in relations of sharing, cooperation, and visiting between camp-group and lineage members, and greater focus on market-production rather than on local pastoral subsistence and exchange. Also, women feared the loss of husbands, brothers, and sons to military service and wage labor. One woman asked me, "If our sons are not here to do the herding, will the government send soldiers to help us? If not, who will do the work? We [women] can't do any more than we already do." Another woman remined me that, "If they want meat on their tables in Kabul, they should leave us alone, or they should pay us more for our animals." Unfortunately, the meat of the HLDC slaughterhouse was destined for Tehran in any case, and not for Kabul or even Herat.

CONCLUSION: A SHEIKHANZAI PROGRAM FOR SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE

It is more important, I think, to point out that the HLDC developers failed to understand and to appreciate the role of women in socioeconomic change than to suggest that Sheikhanzai men were adequately liberated from their own sexist inclinations. As is true in even the most sexually equal societies of the world, Sheikhanzai men still come out ahead of women in most aspects of official power and certainly with respect to public recognition of their power. Sheikhanzai women were never asked by their husbands, at least not within my experience, what their individual or collective views were about the HLDC program, but they repeatedly made their views known in my presence within their own households, and they also did so in public during gatherings of men in their tents.

If we view women's roles and men's attitudes about these roles within the context of material conditions and women's control over material resources, we consistently gain different insights about the power and influence of women. That the HLDC ignored these conditions and gave preference to sexual stereotypes, including ones that Sheikhanzai men would seek to bolster rather than to question, was at least partially responsible for the failure of their expensive but largely useless program.

The socioeconomic change advocated by outsiders has not been adequately informed by Sheikhanzai women themselves or by others aware of their social and economic circumstances. This is unfortunate not only because of the obvious material and human costs involved in the failures of such programs, but also because of our unwillingness to learn from women in traditional societies. To be sure, Sheikhanzai society and economy are not utopia, and no one can doubt the need for improved health services and a reduction in the extreme labor burdens placed upon women. Nevertheless, any attempt at massive structuring of the society along lines we consider more modern is, at best, patronizing and, at worst, potentially devastating to both Sheikhanzai women and men.

In order to end this discussion on a more optimistic note, we might consider an alternative program for change, one that derives directly from the Sheikhanzai themselves and which includes the advice of both women and men. Such a program insists upon the retention of the political autonomy and cultural self-determination of the Sheikhanzai, and both of the latter are made possible through the availability of flexible patterns of settlement and movement. The Sheikhanzai are not oblivious to the fact that such mobility is considerably more problematic in the modern age, but they ask that lands that have traditionally been theirs to use not suddenly be stripped from them or become the basis for

non-Solomonic distributions by the central government between themselves and villagers. Too frequently, villagers and nomads find themselves bribing the same local government officials to give one group access to land one year and the other group access in other years. If guaranteed pasture rights are converted into legal title and made available to all Sheikhanzai, the potential for use of alternative pasture zones can co-exist with a simultaneous reduction of the total amount of land devoted to seasonal pasture use. Even a system of range-management is conceivable if the lands provided for grazing purposes are not so devoid of water and vegetation that over-grazing will result.

Equally important for the political and cultural autonomy of the Sheikhanzai is the perpetuation of cross-cutting networks of residential camp-groups and lineage-based kinship groups. This system of social and territorial linkages not only consolidates the activities of the Sheikhanzai as a people, but it makes it possible for wealth and power differences to be kept to a minimum throughout the entire population. There are and should be Sheikhanzai who act as leaders for their people, but there are no tyrants. The system of economic cooperatives advocated by the HLDC, and the market-oriented production system the HLDC saw as the only course for the future of pastoralism in Afghanistan, would have created class-divisions intolerable in the ideology as well as in the social practice of the Sheikhanzai.

The Sheikhanzai certainly had no objections to improving the health and quality of their animals and thus also improving their market price. But they asked, quite reasonably I thought, why they should have to pay high prices for vaccines and medicines they had not previously used or needed for their animals only to improve the profits of the slaughterhouse in Herat. Instead, why not ask the slaughterhouse to provide the sponsorship for such veterinary care? Although the HLDC response was that the program would have to stand on its own and could not subsidize the husbandry practices of the people selling their animals to the slaughterhouse, they neglected to consider that the dependency relationship created through the loans between HLDC and the pastoralists was just such a subsidy, but in reverse, with the producers asked to provide the basis for profit-making by the slaughterhouse.

The Sheikhanzai also saw that their future well-being depended upon the education of at least some of their children, but these children could not be lost from the group. Parents could not do without the intimate relations they maintained with sons and daughters any more than they could do without their labor. They could not, therefore, send their children away to school, and especially not to schools where the children would be taught to feel inferior or see the lives of their parents as inferior to "modern" ways. On the other hand, a teacher who would be willing to travel and live with them, and who would, like the Sheikhanzai mullahs, teach both girls and boys how to read and write, could be a

valuable innovation and a linkage to the future as well as to the rest of Afghan society.

Finally, in the matter most centrally relevant to the rest of the discussion in this paper, women's work should not only be recognized and rewarded, as it already was, but it could also be reduced. Much time and energy was spent by women getting water, for example, and this could be reduced. The water was drawn from streams and springs that were far away from camps, in part so that the livestock in camps would not go too near the fields that villagers cultivated in the vicinity of these water sources. A program of building wells, providing pumps to reach below levels where water was heavily salinated, and constructing ponds and canals for the accumulation and distribution of water would be a great benefit to women.

But the greater burden on women was not simply that they had too much to do within the sexual division of labor, but that there were too few of them. The death of women in child-birth or through disease was a major reason why the work of the Sheikhanzai woman seemed never-ending and was also a reason why the bride-price was so high. A program of health-care for women sick with tuberculosis and trachoma, or for those who die from inattention to respiratory complications of influenza, seems more essential than nutritional supplements to sheep to make them fat enough for the urban consumer to relish.

Rather than sedentarization and overgrazing, economic cooperatives and the abandonment of kinship responsibilities, raising sheep to put on the wealthy Tehrani's plate and the sacrifice of women's economic roles in dairy production and exchange, and raising fatter sheep and more powerless women, the objectives presented above are the means by which Sheikhanzai women and men could foresee a more rational form of nomadic pastoralism. They were by no means a people who stubbornly struck to tradition irrespective of the changes demanded by the modern world. But they were also not fooled by the false promise of making changes for change's sake. Their orientation toward the future built upon the past, but especially upon the best aspects of the past such as an egalitarian, participatory, and autonomous life-style available to both women and men. True "modernization" for the Sheikhanzai requires a reinforcement of structures which facilitate such relationships and not the adoption of structures that destroy them. Unfortunately, the HLDC program operated in a cultural vacuum with respect to the structures of Sheikhanzai life, and their efforts to bring socioeconomic change were based simply on the attempted replication of elements of our own society rather than on a respect for the practicality of Sheikhanzai traditional culture.

WOMEN AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE AMONG SHEIKHANZAI NOMADS OF WESTERN AFGHANISTAN

Bahram Tavakolian

This paper is based on observations made in 1976–1977, when I conducted field research among Sheikhanzai nomads of western Afghanistan. There have obviously been many changes in the living conditions of the Sheikhanzai since then, changes we can imagine but not discuss or document because we have had no direct access to information about these people during the past six years of armed struggle in Afghanistan. I have used the "ethnographic present" to discuss their traditional society and can only hope that the Sheikhanzai will be tenacious and successful in resisting attempts by the outside world to force them into a new mold.

I have two primary purposes in presenting such a paper. First, I will discuss the traditional social and economic roles and power-relations of Sheikhanzai women in order to demonstrate their significance in pastoral production and social organization. Then, I will show that much of the failure of an externally derived program for socioeconomic change among the Sheikhanzai and other nomadic pastoralists may be explained by the developers' neglect of women's responsibilities and contributions. Because of such neglect, had the program been adopted by the Sheikhanzai, it would have worsened the social and economic conditions of both women and men.

Bahram Tavakolian is associate professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Denison University, Granville, Ohio. *His research and writing on the Sheikhanzai have been supported at various times by grants from Denison University, Mount Holyoke College, and the Joint Committee for Middle Eastern Studies of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies. The author wishes to thank them for the opportunity to tell the Sheikhanzai story, but most of all he wishes to thank the Sheikhanzai for helping him to live and understand a part of their lives.*

The attempts to bring modernization to traditional peoples are not restricted to well-meaning but misguided economic developers, but include changes advocated by idealistic social reformers as well. The reforms in women's rights sought during 1978 and 1979 by the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan have proved to be among the issues which alienated much of the rural population of the country and contributed to the on-going civil war. I have tried to show that an adequate understanding of the social roles of women, and of the implications of changes in these roles, must depend upon an analysis of their ability to control the production, allocation, and distribution of economic resources. One would expect a Marxist government to be aware of this fundamental relationship between economy and society rather than to succumb to the ideological trappings of cosmetic reforms and attempts at replications of Western models of society. Instead, in decrees about land-tenure, marriage systems, and bride-price, the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan systematically ignored the roles of women in traditional patterns of property-ownership and social organization.

For example, under the terms of land reforms instituted or advocated by the Democratic Republic, the rights of Sheikhanzai women to land use and sharing with their own families and patrilineal relatives would have been abrogated and not enhanced. In restricting ownership of prime lands to amounts totally inadequate for animal pasture, the government showed a particular disregard for the needs of the two million pastoral nomads of Afghanistan. Furthermore, land registration requirements would have made it impossible for people such as the Sheikhanzai to be able to claim legal title to lands to which they held only usufruct rights on a seasonal basis; and, as one might expect by now, land title was only to be a right bestowed upon male household heads. Whereas Sheikhanzai women held patrilineal rights to the lineage land of their fathers, brothers, and other patri-kin, such rights were to be relinquished in the land reforms, and kinship-based land rights in general were to be replaced by patterns of individual ownership.

Similarly, the lineage structure of Sheikhanzai society emphasizes a structural and ideological equivalence between inter-marrying households, and bride-price payments are one of the levelling mechanisms serving to reduce potential imbalances in household wealth and power. Households which are better off in animal holdings and other forms of wealth are expected to provide substantially more of a bride-price when their sons marry, and poorer households must meet lesser economic obligations. Furthermore, payment of a bride-price is a responsibility of the corporate family and not simply that of a solitary individual. Since marriage to tribal relatives is practically universal among the Sheikhanzai, the flow of resources through bride-price does not serve to increase but to reduce indebtedness between households.

Within this structural system, women not only give voluntary consent to their marriages to tribal and lineage relatives, but they maintain life-long relationships with their natal families and act as mediators in relationships between their husbands and their own patri-kin. The portion of a family patrimony which goes toward the payment of a bride-price also entitles sisters, who, contrary to Islamic law, do not receive a direct inheritance, to call upon their brothers for economic assistance. Since their brothers' wealth is in part made up through the resources provided through bride-price, women indirectly receive their patrimony through such assistance. Their children, too, may take the option of camping and grazing their animals with their mother's kin if patrilineage rights to land are inadequate for their needs.

An actual bride-price may represent a token payment between patrilineally related households, or it may involve huge sums of as much as $7000 worth of animals, commodities, and cash. In either case the bride directly shares in the wealth, whether through the aforementioned benefits of assistance from her brothers or through "protection" for her well-being and happiness. Most importantly, the patrilineal tie which is maintained by a woman to her brothers and other lineage relatives extends the rights of her husband as well. But when financial assistance, especially in the form of animals, is offered to a woman and her husband from the woman's patri-kin, the animals or other contributions may not be used in a transaction by a man without his wife's approval and support. Thus, the bride-price serves not only to place a value upon women, to equalize relationships between families, and to restrict or discourage mistreatment and divorce, but it also provides women with an immediate basis for economic control and political power over household activities.

It is ironic that change-agents from communities which allow women considerably less control over property and decision-making find it necessary to change the lives of people such as the Sheikhanzai. This is not only true of Western reformers, but also of the Westernized Afghan, who seeks to restructure societies which have successfully achieved a higher degree of sexual equality than the urban populations of Afghanistan, not to mention even societies such as our own. The Sheikhanzai should not be understood simply as an interesting example of a different, and nearly extinct, form of social and ecological adaptation, and they are certainly not merely objects of anthropological curiosity. The only proper way in which we can give them the respect they are due is to see them as models of a way of life that we might follow in order to improve our own lives. Perhaps, it is they who should be the change-agents, and not us.

Contrary to the common Western stereotype of Muslim women as powerless, subjugated, and oppressed victims of Islamic ideology and a patriarchal social structure, women of the Sheikhanzai tribe make significant and indispensable contributions to social, political, and economic decision-making in their nomadic pastoralist society. Their management of economic resources, particularly animals and animal products, provides them with sources of power, and with positions as power-wielders and power-brokers, that are frequently unavailable to women in sedentary communities. These roles and contributions of women are socially and materially bound within an adaptive system of political organization and economy which promotes intra-group cooperation and which enhances the political strength and economic viability of the Sheikhanzai in opposition to the Afghan central state and to the other local populations in an ethnically heterogeneous region.

The examination and understanding of such a society can help to indicate the depth of the problems faced by traditional peoples in general, and by women in particular, in the developing world. Third World women are not only the victims of capitalist penetration and transnational proletarianization, but also of Western-oriented, yet patriarchal, social and ideological reformers in their own countries. The central government-sponsored proposals for the "rationalization" of pastoralism and the "modernization" of Sheikhanzai economy and society were ill-advised from the start, and they did not stand much chance of acceptance by the Sheikhanzai. In addition, the experiences of the Sheikhanzai help us reflect upon why such programs are likely to fail when only the male half of the population is considered relevant to attempts at economic development and social change.

That the Sheikhanzai were aware of such problems is in itself an indication of the practicality and meaningfulness of modes of social life in kin-based societies. Unfortunately, we in the West frequently fail to acknowledge or to avoid the potential for cultural victimization when we seek to bring about development according to our own models and standards and, ultimately, in our own economic and political interest. In the following section I will discuss the aspects of traditional Sheikhanzai organization and production that we must investigate before we can participate in culturally appropriate programs for change and achieve objectives advocated by the Sheikhanzai themselves.

TRADITIONAL SHEIKHANZAI ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

The 10,000 nomadic Sheikhanzai are sheep and goat-herding pastoralists who migrate each year from winter pastures near the Iranian and Soviet borders of northwestern Afghanistan a distance of 250 miles to highland summer pastures in the western Hindu Kush mountain range. They are a Pushtu-speaking people closely related to, and politically unified with, other Eshakzai pastoral no-

mads who were encouraged to move to northwest Afghanistan in the 1890s by Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan. They, and the other 200,000 Eshakzai pastoral nomads who occupy winter pastures in the northwest, represent a population which is ethnically distinct from the surrounding populations of Dari-speaking sedentary villagers, or "Farsiwan" as they are known to the Sheikhanzai. Although the Sheikhanzai were initially brought into the area as prospective sedentary cultivators, they have continued to practice the form of seasonal nomadism which characterized their adaptations in previous homelands of southern and southwestern Afghanistan.

Today, Sheikhanzai nomads are exclusively involved in a pastoral economy, and they typically neither own nor work agricultural land. Their semi-annual migrations occur in the spring, when they make their 45-day journey from the provinces or Herat and Badghis to the province to Ghorat in the central highlands of Afghanistan, and in the fall when they cover the same basic route in reverse direction in a month-long migration. The ecological purpose of Sheikhanzai migrations is to avoid the extremes of heat and cold which are found in their two major pasture areas and to avail their herds of seasonally abundant forage. During the months of sedentary pasturage, short migrations are made with the herds for grazing and watering purposes, but the camp groups remain in fixed locations.

In terms of political considerations, the mobility of the Sheikhanzai has allowed them to avoid the obligations imposed by the central government of Afghanistan on sedentary populations. Not only do the Sheikhanzai recognize only their own political leaders and local means of conflict-resolution, but they also refuse to register births, to participate in educational institutions of the state, to provide military service, or to pay taxes to the central government of Afghanistan. In response the role of the state has been to encourage the expansion of village cultivation into Sheikhanzai pasture areas and, thus, to attempt to reduce the economic and political prominence which nomads have enjoyed in the area for the past century.

Ethnic and linguistic separations between the Sheikhanzai and villagers are reinforced through their respective economic specializations as well as through patterns of in-marriage within their ethnic groups and tribal divisions. For most Sheikhanzai, relations with villagers are restricted primarily to those of the marketplace, and they do not extend to ties of a regional political nature. Despite being Hanafi Muslims in common with most of the village and urban peoples of the area, the Sheikhanzai do not interact within the religious institutions of the surrounding population. Also, the form of economic symbiosis that characterizes relations between many nomads and farmers of Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey is not found in western or central Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Sheikhanzai must exchange surplus animal and dairy resources with sedentary populations of villagers and urban merchants in order to obtain the wheat which they make into bread, the most important non-dairy staple in their diet. They must also obtain

money through the sale of animals and wool to pay for pasture rental in areas that were previously free for their use but have come under cultivation during the present generation. In both winter and summer sedentary pasture locations, Sheikhanzai land ownership is legally unrecorded, and land-disputes with settled village populations are common.

The absence of institutionalized social, political, and economic relations with non-nomads has encouraged the perpetuation of a self-contained system of decentralized and relatively egalitarian social organization based upon seasonal camp-groups and patrilineal lineages. Although the Sheikhanzai are but one of the many lineage subdivisions within the Es'hakzai tribe, they are not subordinate to any kind of outside leader or council, and collective political action of the entire tribe is rare. Instead, local authority for decision-making and legal adjudication is vested in individuals through lineage membership. Since the preferred form of marriage is between cousins, and 35 per cent of Sheikhanzai marriages are between patrilateral cousins, households in individual camps are closely tied to kin in many other camps. In addition, lineage rights to grazing, and obligations of economic and political support, are cross-cut by territorial and camp-group relations which depend heavily upon social linkages through women as well as between male kinsmen.

In such an ecological and political context, the most adaptive form of social organization for the Sheikhanzai is the independent tent-household. Individual households are both politically and economically independent to join a wide variety of camp-groups on the basis of lineage membership, marriage, and ties of friendship and partnership. Tent-households grouped together within a single camp have a nominal camp leader who negotiates rights to pasture and water for the entire group, but no further political authority may legitimately be expressed by the camp headman. Social disputes and political or economic conflicts are resolved by assemblies of male lineage elders. Unofficially, since women are not directly represented within such gatherings, many decisions are dependent upon the information, advice, and direction men receive from their wives and other female kin. If adequate resolution to local problems is not possible, households always retain the option of leaving a camp and joining one of a number of other different camp-groups.

The nucleus of the Sheikhanzai social group is thus the patrilocal extended household, containing patrilineal kin drawn from three generations along with inmarrying (or, frequently, already patrilineally related) wives. These households are highly variable in size, composition, and whereabouts throughout the annual cycle of migration and settlement. Individual tents range in composition from a small nuclear family of three or four people to one tent I observed which housed 17 people, including brothers, their wives and children, parents, unmarried sisters, and widowed aunts and uncles. Camp membership may vary from year to year, and it may also change in the middle of a single season in the event of con-

flict between households, dissatisfaction with shepherding arrangements, or the frequent rationalization that grass for herd-animals might be better elsewhere.

Households represent single economic units in which all animals and most other belongings are held in common. Even after the death of their father, brothers and their families frequently continue to reside in a single tent, or in adjacent tents, and they pool their economic resources. Brothers in a joint household, or sons living with their fathers, are considered co-managers of an undivided family patrimony. Should brothers separate into independent households, and especially if they join separate camp-groups, livestock is evenly divided between them, while sisters "forgive" their rights to a half-portion of the inheritance and receive other benefits of potentially life-long economic assistance for themselves and their families. At the level of the family or household, property is thus primarily conceptualized and distributed on the basis of collective ownership.

The sharing of resources extends beyond the household as well, and the households of a camp-group share in rights to common pasture, rights to water, and the use of surplus animals—especially camels—for transportation needs on migration and in trading wool and hides for wheat. There is considerable "lending" of animals for stock-building purposes, provision of animal and dairy products to poorer families, and even gifts of money and purchased commodities such as wheat and tea, without definite expectation or calculation of return. The Sheikhanzai also cooperate in the collective sale of animal hides, wool, dairy products, collective purchase of wheat and animal fodder, and common rental of pasturage where land-use rights do not exist. There are also frequent exchanges of labor between adults and also between their sons and daughters, who provide such services as herding, child-care, and cooking for other households that are without an adequate labor supply.

Sheep and goat-herds are owned individually, by households, but grazed collectively. Each household thus retains its potential for mobility and for fissioning off from one camp-group in order to join another. Camp-group size is determined by the number of animals owned by the constituent households. That is, a camp collectively hires a shepherd to care for 400 to 600 adult animals. If one household (in a very unusual instance) were to own that number of animals by itself, it would be the only tent-household in a camp. Far more typically, as many as ten or twelve households must group together to contribute the requisite number of animals for efficient grazing.

Since camp members share one another's rights to pasture and water, the less closely related the camp members are, the more extensive are their potential rights in other camps and territories. Even so, the choice of camping sites is usually determined by kinship ties and personal relations. Kinsmen tend to occupy pasture territories in common with one another so that there is a close relationship between kinship ties and territorial location for most Sheikhanzai. In

addition the frequency of in-marriage reinforces close economic relations through women between patrilineal relatives and in-laws.

Although most of the pastoral production of the Sheikhanzai is devoted to dairy products for local consumption, surplus milk, which is immediately converted into yogurt and other secondary products, is used for market exchange or in direct trade for wheat, animal fodder, and tent furnishings. Animal hides, wool, goat-hair tent strips, and live animals are other products used as a basis for exchange and sale. Money obtained from market transactions is used for animal purchases, bride-price payments, grazing land rentals and (rare) land purchases, and for commodities such as tea, rice, sugar, candy, salt, cooking-ware, cloth and finished clothing, fuel, watches, and radios.

However, the Sheikhanzai do not produce for the market, and the nature of their milk surplus is defined not only in terms of household needs, but also in terms of economic responsibilities to kin-group and camp members. Within the camp, mutual responsibility extends access to economic resources to the more impoverished households. Out-migration is discouraged for rich and poor alike, and levelling mechanisms operate through alms-giving, hospitality requirements, bride-pride demands, and the sponsorship of feasts and rituals to maintain wealth differences at a minimum.

SHEIKHANZAI DIVISION OF LABOR

Shepherding and marketing activities are typically carried out by Sheikhanzai men and adolescent boys, and dairy and wool production activities are the usual responsibilities of women and adolescent girls. The roles of the sexes are complementary, and knowledge of each other's activities is sufficient to allow frequent and easy movement into the specialized labors of the opposite sex. Although the Sheikhanzai are not compulsive about a strict sexual division of labor, the labor duties of women may involve up to 17 hours of work each day, and men will rarely contribute directly to relieve this work burden so long as there are enough women and girls in the household to do it. Even so, men, especially widowers, will milk animals, and adolescent boys will get water for the household and serve tea if girls are involved in other activities. Similarly, adolescent girls will help herd animals in households that do not include boys of a similar age.

Although women do not usually own livestock, there are exceptions to this, and even men may more appropriately be considered to be managers rather than owners of the household flock. Inheritance rights of women (officially half the share a brother is entitled to receive) are generally "forgiven" or figured into a woman's dowry in the form of clothing, tent furnishings, jewelry, and coins. Women are considered to be the "owners" of the tent and of most household belongings (the major exceptions are rifles, radios, and tape-recorders), and they

have considerable influence over migration schedules and settlement sites. Most importantly, women's labors determine the amount of surplus in dairy and wool products which will be produced, and they directly influence the allocation of this surplus in terms of decisions about channels through which such products will be available for distribution and exchange.

Regardless of the number of sheep and goats owned by a household, the quantity of dairy goods obtained from them is dependent upon the care with which women carry out milking and milk production responsibilities. Since the labor supply of women in any household is limited, there is a point of diminishing returns in the size of the flock owned by a household. That is to say, animal ownership is more reflective of the number of women available for pastoral production activities than of the gross wealth of the household or of the number of men and boys available for herding duties. So long as household food and hospitality requirements are met, surplus animals are best used through distribution to other, more needy, Sheikhanzai households rather than becoming the source of an increased labor burden for the women in an individual tent.

The domestic economic duties of Sheikhanzai women thus provide them with direct power in their society through the fact that while others may own or manage the herds, it is the women who convert the herds into food and exchange resources. Even if one were to be reminded that live animals, as well as animal products, form the basis for Sheikhanzai economic exchange, it must also be reiterated that it is women who do most of the milking and who thus determine how much milk young male animals will receive from ewes and nannies, and, therefore, how fat they get and how much market value they will have.

The creation of a surplus in animal and diary resources within the domestic economy—through prudent consumption as well as through production—also contributes to the widening of social and political ties through distribution of such a surplus to patrilineal relatives and in-laws in one's own and in other camps. While this is most frequently expressed through reciprocal visiting and feasting, both of which are dependent upon food allocation and preparation by women, it also allows for the provision of economic assistance and the expectation of political support from genealogically and geographically more distant kin.

In one further matter, since bride-wealth is normally animal wealth, the careful management of household resources in animal and dairy products is also instrumental in determining the size of the patrimony available to sons and brothers upon inheritance. A corollary to this point is that a woman's skill as a pastoralist producer and manager makes her a particularly attractive wife and daughter-in-law.

Sheikhanzai women are neither veiled nor segregated within their households and camps. More significant than these superficial differences from the customary Western stereotypes of Muslim women, however, are the considerable respect with which women and women's work are viewed by Sheikhanzai men

and the appreciation and happiness shown when a girl is born. A Sheikhanzai household is more hard-pressed economically if there is a shortage of women than if there is a shortage of men. While adolescent boys frequently provide daily labor services to other households, especially through overnight assistance to the shepherd, girls are usually far too valuable within their own household labor supply to be available for more than a few hours at a time. A further indication of the value of women is also to be found in the customary bride-price of 1 ½ to 3 "laks" (ca. $3500–$7000) at the time of my field research.

Bernt Glatzer has reported for other nomads in western Afghanistan that "the main burden of pastoral routine rests with the women,[1]" and Sheikhanzai men acknowledge that their pastoral economy would be impossible without the labors of their womenfolk. As would be expected in a society with a dominant patriarchal ideology, men compliment a hard-working and productive woman by saying that she "works like a man." But, women are neither submissive nor mere shadows in the society, and the means by which they contribute to a pastoral economy provide them with both control of resources and considerable power through such control.

SHEIKHANZAI WOMEN AS POWER-WIELDERS AND POWER-BROKERS

The political power of Sheikhanzai women is expressed in two forms: 1) as power-wielders within a household through their direct influence over their husbands, sons, brothers, and even their fathers, and 2) as power-brokers through their influence over the relationships that their male kin maintain with one another and with other men. Both of these types of power depend upon the economic roles of women in production, allocation of resources, and the distribution of these resources. As power-wielders, women produce the goat-hair tent strips out of which the Sheikhanzai black tents are constructed. They own the tents, and they may and do interrupt a migration if the tents are too difficult to take down or to set up. Although rain and wet tents are the usual reasons given for such an interruption, other occasions such as sickness and childbirth also provide women with opportunties to influence the migration schedule. The tent and its belongings are not merely symbolically associated with women and the "private" realm. Rather, the women's material production of the tent provides them with its control, and, through this control, power over the activities of men as well.

Such control of the tent does not pertain only to the migration schedule, but also to pasture sites, as women directly influence the kinds of relations which are maintained with kin-group and camp members, and, especially, between in-laws.

1. "Processes of Nomadization in Western Afghanistan," paper presented at International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences Intercongress, Amsterdam, 1981, pp. 10–11.

The most consistent pattern of visitation among Sheikhanzai is between brothers and sisters in different camps, and decisions about camp locations, hospitality relations, mutual economic activities and economic reciprocity as well as political alliances between in-laws, are mediated by women. Furthermore, especially given the importance of cooperative relations between the women of a household, the influence of women in marriage transactions and in dealings with prospective daughters-in-law is a significant factor in the marriage decisions officially reached by senior men. As mentioned before, women are responsible for the size and quality of the patrimony available to the men of a household, and they also help to establish the appropriate bride-price to be asked for their daughters or to be offered in exchange for their sons' brides.

In their roles as power-brokers, women also have power over their husbands' reputations for hospitality and generosity through how skillfully food is prepared for guests, how much is available for sharing with others, and with whom this sharing takes place. In addition the prestige and power available to a man is related to the commodity and animal purchases he is able to make on the basis of sale or exchange of the dairy and other products contributed by the labors of women of his household. Women, furthermore, enjoy a command of information about their own and other camps which is of great significance in what are often officially acknowledged as male decisions and prerogatives. Through their own social networks, as well as through information provided to them by their children, women have knowledge that their husbands do not always share about marriage squabbles, conflicts between brothers and between fathers and sons, economic difficulties, and even about the formation of economic and political alliances between households.

In this way, too, they are power-brokers in influencing how men will be able to use their own power. In such areas as in political alliances, marriage transactions, in-law relations, visiting patterns, and economic assistance, the active cooperation of women must be solicited for the negotiations and activities of men in the so-called "public" realm to succeed. Finally, the pattern of marrying within the lineage and sub-tribe make divorce and abandonment of women almost unheard of since the relatives of women are quick to provide them with assistance against their husbands in cases of abuse, lack of support, or insufficient attention. The infrequent cases of polygyny occur in the context of co-wife cooperation and complementarity in household responsibilities, or they require financial support for a separate tent focused upon a first wife and her children.

In sum, although it would be an exaggeration to assert that women and men are completely equal in status, prestige, mobility, and authority in traditional Sheikhanzai society, it would also be an error to conclude that such a society is exclusively male-dominated. Attention to the voices and the will of women is essential not only for a harmonious household, but for an economically and po-